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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 13 October 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Chipaziwa ..... (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 50: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/65/20 and A/C.4/65/L.2) (*continued*)

1. **Mr. González Aninat** (Chile) described the enormous assistance his Government had received, enabling it to achieve the extraordinary technological, human and humanitarian feat of rescuing the miners trapped in the San José mine in Chile. The United States of America, experts from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the United Nations and, especially, the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), together with other organizations and friendly countries, had demonstrated the often overlooked spin-offs of space technology, which had saved the lives of people who had been practically abandoned 700 metres underground. He expressed his sincere gratitude to all those who had collaborated in the rescue and reiterated Chile's commitment to ensuring that all countries benefited, without discrimination, from the peaceful uses of outer space.

2. **Mr. Prunariu** (Romania), speaking as Chairperson of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), recalled that for half a century the Committee had witnessed and been at the centre of humankind's amazing exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes, and its efforts to bring the benefits of space technology to Earth in order to ensure sustainable development for all countries. At its very first meeting as a permanent body, in 1961, the Committee had adopted the text that would become General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI), a seminal text that had laid the foundation for international space law, made the United Nations a focal point for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and also established the need for registration of space objects.

3. COPUOS could now look back at a successful first decade of the twenty-first century. It had aligned many of its activities with the Millennium Development Goals, and the implementation of the recommendations of the third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) had been one of its central efforts, leading to the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER). UN-SPIDER was becoming an essential mechanism and a strong tool for better coordination of disaster management and emergency response the world over, especially after the establishment of regional support offices in several countries, the latest being China.

4. Space tools were indispensable in other areas closely interlinked with disasters, such as climate change, food security and global health, and COPUOS had worked to increase awareness and build capacity in many of those critical areas. It now had an opportunity to look more closely into how advanced space research and technologies could contribute to addressing specific concerns such as clean energy and drinking water, the management of natural resources, tele-education and tele-health applications and capacity-building, and how research in human space flight, especially through the International Space Station, could be made an even stronger tool for development.

5. Introducing the report of the Committee on its fifty-third session (A/65/20), he said that in the past year, COPUOS had continued its consideration of the important agenda items discussed in sections II.E to J of the report, several of which related directly or indirectly to the work carried out by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, the only United Nations-wide coordination mechanism for space-related activities. It had also continued to contribute actively to thematic clusters under the work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

6. The Committee's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee had worked jointly on promoting national implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's interaction with the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) was evolving, and its work with the International Atomic Energy Agency had resulted in the adoption of the Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Source Applications in Outer Space. The Subcommittee's Working Group on Near-Earth Objects was making progress on the issue of defending the Earth from the threat of asteroids. The Subcommittee's new agenda item on the International Space Weather Initiative had allowed it to focus on the wide-ranging and variable impact of space weather especially on

communication and transport. The Subcommittee had also continued to consider the latest developments in the field of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) and their economic and social benefits. For its part, ICG had proven to be an important platform for international cooperation in achieving interoperability among GNSS providers.

7. The Legal Subcommittee was currently reviewing national space legislation and regulatory frameworks for space activities, as well as international space law governing exploration activities relating to the Moon and other celestial bodies.

8. The major space-related mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and the Americas were providing platforms for enhanced coordination and cooperation between spacefaring nations and emerging space nations and establishing partnerships between users and providers of space-based services. The regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations were, with the support of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, doing commendable work; and a basic course on space law to be offered by the regional centres was currently being devised by the Office for Outer Space Affairs in cooperation with expert educators and the directors of the regional centres.

9. **Mr. Assaraf** (Israel) said that the Israel Space Agency was contributing to the peaceful use of outer space by promoting innovative scientific projects based on international collaboration, since that was the best way to achieve significant advances and create technological breakthroughs. It had signed cooperation agreements with eight countries and would conclude similar agreement in the near future with four other countries. Israel was also currently negotiating a framework agreement to join the European Space Agency.

10. Israel had officially entered the space age with the launch of its first satellite in September 1988; it continued to emphasize its technological advantages in certain niches, notably small sophisticated satellites and satellite-based technologies such as remote sensing. In recent years, the Israeli space industry had continued to expand its links with foreign partners and had sought to advance a number of projects that would benefit the international community at large. Israel and France, for instance, were cooperating on an innovative project using an observation microsatellite that produced highly accurate data on the impact of environmental factors and human activities on land surface and would help optimize agriculture and aquaculture. Israel also had a special partnership with NASA, which it had maintained even after its joint mission on the Columbia shuttle had, after producing valuable data, ended in tragedy. Israel had recently joined the NASA Lunar Science Institute and would carry out joint scientific undertakings, including the establishment of an infrastructure to facilitate virtual collaboration. Israel had also begun to work closely with Italy's space agency with which it had cooperated successfully in the multispectral field.

11. The Israeli private sector was also a significant contributor to the space industry, and included a number of companies that produced space products. Their activities included providing rural communication services to remote communities in a number of countries and, in the field of space electro-optics, developing an advanced hyper-spectral system. An Israeli company had launched its third communication satellite in 2008 and in 2011 would launch a fourth satellite that would provide coverage to most of the Middle East and East Central Europe and a bridge to North America. Israel eagerly looked forward to expanding its space cooperation and sharing its experience with even more States and providing access to outer space for countries without the ability to do so independently.

12. **Ms. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan), noting that international spaceship crews were still using Kazakhstan's Baikonur complex, from which the first cosmonaut had been launched, said that her Government was implementing a national outer space programme, in line with COPUOS guidelines and recommendations, for the period 2010-2020. Space data was essential for managing water resources, preventing and dealing with emergency situations, especially in developing countries, monitoring the environment and further developing a global navigation satellite system. The benefits of using aerospace science and technology applications to advance global development should be more widely publicized, and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Space Activities should expand its activities. The Fourth Committee itself should give high priority to the consideration of ways and means to preserve outer space for peaceful uses alone. Her Government called on all Member States, especially those possessing high

potential for exploring outer space, to take active steps to prevent an arms race there, in order to preserve it for the enrichment of humankind and the planet.

13. **Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa) noted the immense potential of the peaceful use of outer space for contributing to worldwide sustainable development, in terms of economic growth, poverty reduction and the creation of knowledge. That goal underpinned South Africa's new space policy and would guide its national space agency, which was expected to be fully operational in 2011. Its first national satellite had been launched from Kazakhstan as a secondary payload to the Russian Federation's Soyuz rocket. South Africa had also built a radio telescope array that in April 2010 had produced the very first interferometric image of an astronomical object.

14. The development of space programmes required cooperation at the regional and international levels. Together with Kenya, Nigeria and Algeria, under the auspices of the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, South Africa was, working on a constellation of low-Earth orbiting satellites; that cooperation was a major feat for the African space industry that would expand the continent's technological capacity. At the global level, South Africa was helping to develop international norms for the use of outer space that would allow all States, and not simply the wealthier and currently spacefaring States, to benefit from its use. The principles of fairness, equal access and non-discrimination were of crucial importance. Within COPUOS, his delegation had stressed the importance of capacity-building, including the development of human resources; it would be chairing the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. South Africa had also offered to host a UN-SPIDER regional office and was making preparations for hosting the International Astronautical Congress in 2011, the first time that it would meet in Africa.

15. **Mr. Sahraei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his Government was aware of the substantial contribution of satellite applications to the well-being of mankind and to the socio-economic development of all countries, but recalled that space activities should be carried out in a manner compatible with the sovereign rights of States, including the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs. It reiterated the need for further international cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space, and expressed concern over the likelihood of an arms race in outer space, which required greater international awareness and preventive efforts. As the common heritage of mankind, outer space must be explored and utilized for exclusively peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind, in a spirit of cooperation and without discrimination.

16. Under the Iranian space programme, three new satellites had been brought into operation and would be launched by a new domestic satellite launch vehicle in the near future. A domestically manufactured sounding rocket had been successfully launched in February 2010 and had produced interesting research results. In addition, in November 2009, his Government had hosted a joint workshop with the United Nations on the role of international space law in the development and strengthening of international and regional cooperation in the peaceful exploration of outer space.

17. Given his country's location in a disaster-prone area, his Government had always supported the work of UN-SPIDER. In June 2009, a cooperation agreement had been signed on the establishment of a regional support office in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

18. **Mr. Sayeed** (India), reviewing his country's significant space achievements in the past year, said that its polar satellite launch vehicle had placed its OCEANSAT-2 in orbit, carrying equipment from Italy and producing data that would be shared with international space agencies for their operational applications. It had also launched another six international nano-satellites, and satellites from Algeria and Canada. Another Indian satellite, with many international payloads including one from the United States of America, had been instrumental in conclusively establishing the presence of water and hydroxyl molecules on the lunar surface; and in a unique joint experiment with NASA, the satellite was searching for additional information on the possibility of the existence of ice on the Moon. In order to study the longest annular solar eclipse of the Millennium, in January 2010, India had launched 11 sounding rockets in two days.

19. In the coming months, the Indian space research organization planned to augment its constellation of remote-sensing and communications satellites, to be used for natural resource management, tropical

atmospheric studies and ocean surface studies. A heavier class of launch vehicle capable of launching communications satellites into a geostationary transfer orbit had also been developed. The emphasis of the Indian space programme had always been on integrating advances in space technology and applications with national development goals, particularly in such vital areas as telecommunications, television broadcasting, meteorology, disaster warning and natural resources survey and management.

20. As part of its international cooperation in space activities, India had entered into agreements with Argentina, the Republic of Korea and Saudi Arabia for various peaceful uses of outer space, and was establishing a user terminal in Papua New Guinea to receive multispectral Earth observation data. It was participating actively in the initiatives of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, providing weather radar technology to the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and sharing disaster-management satellite data with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It was also actively participating in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and some of its projects, and had chaired several technical committees in that field. India continued to offer support to help build the capacity of the developing countries to avail themselves of space technology applications. The United Nations-affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and the Pacific was operating from India. Lastly, the Indian space programme was entering into a space exploration phase, mainly to explore the Sun and the inner solar system and build capabilities for exploring the outer solar system.

21. **Mr. Jomaa** (Tunisia) said that his delegation attached great importance to the peaceful uses of outer space and was very pleased that COPUOS had accepted its application for membership and had included a recommendation to that effect in its report. His delegation looked forward to playing an active and effective role in the work of that Committee.

22. In pursuit of the benefits to economic and social development that space technology had to offer, Tunisia had established a national committee on outer space and a national centre on remote sensing, and was playing an important role in the Arabsat satellite project. Moreover, it had participated in various scientific congresses relating to the work of the International Astronautical Federation, the International Academy of Astronautics and the International Institute of Space Law.

23. The report prepared by COPUOS, in document A/65/20, reflected the number and diversity of fields affected by the peaceful uses of outer space. Communication satellites and remote sensing technologies had already demonstrated their value to humanity in a context of climate change and challenges arising in connection with natural resources, including water in particular. Tunisia intended to do its utmost to support the international community's efforts to develop peaceful uses of outer space in the service of development in various areas, including that of natural hazards and disasters.

24. **Mr. Aigner** (Austria) said that during the devastating natural disasters of the previous year in Haiti and Chile, the use of space-based technologies offered by UN-SPIDER had been invaluable in supporting early warning as well as effective relief and rehabilitation efforts, and had helped communities at risk by linking the disaster management community with the space community. Austria had provided considerable financial and human resources to UN-SPIDER ever since its inception; his Government encouraged other Member States to make voluntary commitments, including financial support, to enable UN-SPIDER to carry out its ambitious workplan. The SpaceAid framework enabled crucial high-quality imagery to be provided immediately after a disaster; Austria supported the establishment of a SpaceAid account to cover the cost of accessing the requisite information to support specific emergency situations.

25. Austria was in the process of developing national space legislation as a prerequisite for sustainable outer space activities; it would be launching its first satellite in 2011. As one of the States that had ratified all five United Nations treaties on outer space, Austria urged others to do so and, in particular, to become parties to the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which was lagging behind. The Legal Subcommittee had taken up important issues such as space debris, commercialization of the space sector and nuclear power sources; these issues needed to be further addressed with a view to strengthening existing legal regimes and considering the need for new regimes.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.